

Business Update

Electronic Tax Filings and Payments Skyrocket

The business community is swiftly embracing electronic tax filing. More than 76 percent of all wage records reported to Employment Security are now submitted electronically. More than 11,000 businesses switched to electronic filing during the last three quarterly filing cycles.

UIFastTax, located at www.wa.gov/esd/uifasttax and available for free download, is the most popular filing software tool for IBM compatible personal computers.

Lauri Schroader from the Richard Michael Joseph Company filed with UIFastTax and said, "All done and

complete. What a great way to process when you have so many employees."

Our fastest growing electronic tax tool is the online debit payment system "E-Pay," which is growing at a rate of 50 percent per quarter. In April, 3,505 businesses paid their unemployment taxes on E-Pay, compared to 2,348 in January 2003 and 1,389 in

E-Pay - Our fastest growing electronic tax tool.

October 2002.

In response to customer requests, E-Pay will soon allow repeat users to select bank transit routing and account numbers provided during prior successful transactions. Go to www.wa.gov/esd/uifasttax to learn more about E-Pay.

Employers to be Sent New Child Support Medical Notice

The Federal Child Support Performance and Incentive Act of 1998 created the National Medical Support Notice (NMSN). It is a uniform notice that all states are required to use to enroll an employee's children in their employment-based health insurance plan.

As a result, employers will no longer have to deal with different notices sent by different states to collect child

support from employees who are non-custodial parents.

While the new form is standardized nationally, it is different and longer than the existing form received by Washington employers.

The state's Division of Child Support plans to begin sending out the new form starting October 1, 2003. A more in-depth story about the NMSN will be published in the next quarterly newsletter.

Alternate Base Year (ABY) Letter to Employers

During the first seven weeks of every new quarter, you may receive a recorded phone message alerting you to watch for a letter from us requesting wage and hours worked information on former employees.

You will receive the letter if your former employee needs this information to file a claim for unemployment insurance benefits.

Because wage and hours worked information is needed prior to the due date for your Quarterly Tax Report, the "Alternate Base Year" letter is sent to you to complete and return to us as soon as possible. The wages you report on the letter should be for those wages paid during the quarter in question not when earned.

To prevent discrepancies and errors that result in overpayments, delay of payments, or underpayments, it is important that the wages and hours submitted to us on the "Alternate Base Year" letter be exactly the same as those you will report on your Quarterly Tax Report.

June 2003

Visit us online at
www.wa.gov/esd/bizupdate

Online Articles

- Apprenticeships Are Alive and Well
- DSHS Offers Employer Web Site For Child Support Payments

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www.wa.gov/esd/uifasttax

District Tax Offices

Bellevue	(425) 649-4388
Bellingham	(360) 676-2070
Lynnwood	(425) 774-2380
Olympia	(360) 407-5145
Out of State	(360) 902-9620
Seattle North	(206) 706-3801
Seattle South	(206) 766-6300
Spokane	(509) 532-3090
Tacoma	(253) 593-7380
Tri-Cities	(509) 734-5880
Vancouver	(360) 735-5050
Wenatchee	(509) 662-0448
Yakima	(509) 574-0137

**Washington State
Employment Security**

Your Diligence Can Curb Fraud and Cut Your Tax Bill

Unemployment Insurance (UI) identity theft is an important issue for the Employment Security Department (ESD). To protect your employees and help control your UI costs, ESD is actively investigating any instances of identity theft and implementing new procedures that will better detect and prevent identity theft in the UI program. Your cooperation is crucial in this effort.

Last quarter a Puget Sound employer called because seven of its employees who were still working were listed on its Notice to Base Year Employer form. During the next four weeks, identity theft was attempted against 47 out of its 56 employees. Not one UI benefit dollar was paid out because of the diligence of the person who reviews employer's form and the prompt reporting of the fraud.

During the course of an investigation, ESD may contact you for additional information and ask for your prompt response. If an investigation reveals that an identity theft claim was filed using your employee's information, ESD will take appropriate action to correct the fraudulent claim and remove the charges from your account.

Additionally, ESD encourages you and your agents to take all necessary

steps to protect employee social security numbers, wage information and personal data. To prevent identity theft and help control your UI costs:

- Thoroughly review every "Notice to Base Year Employer" (EMS 166) form and "Statement of Benefit Charges" we send you. Call us immediately at (360) 902-9670 if you find a person listed who is still working or has not had their hours reduced;
- Double-check all "Wage Verification" (FM001) forms. Call our Fraud hotline at 1-866-810-0210 if the worker listed on the form never worked for you or if the person works for you full time; and
- Report all new hires to DSHS, Division of Child Support. This supports wage verification by ESD to curb improper payments.

ESD is fully committed to partnering with the employer community to help protect employees' personal data, as well as help protect employer accounts and contribution rates. Employers or other interested parties with information regarding UI identity theft or other types of fraud should call ESD's toll-free Fraud Hotlines at 1-866-810-0210, 1-866-266-1987, or 1-800-332-2084.

"... identity theft was attempted against 47 out of their 56 employees."

Save Your Business Money With Shared Work!

Are you anticipating or experiencing an unexpected slowdown in your business? For more information, call 1-800-752-2500.

Not available during seasonal slowdowns or for part-time employees.



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New Service for Employers Confronting Layoffs

The Seattle-King County Rapid Response Team announced the establishment of a new, on-line resource for King County employers May 1. The Web site will aid employers confronting plant closures, mass layoffs, or significant workforce reductions.

Through the Transition Assistance and Layoff Support Services Web site (<http://www.skcrapidresponse.org/>), businesses and other employers can find information regarding a wide variety of services and the organizations that provide them.

Highlights also include information on the federal WARN law, best practices to employ during layoff situations, links to several employment and training service provider web sites, and a single point of contact for accessing services.

The web site was produced by the Worker Center, the Economic and Workforce Development Division of the King County Labor Council, AFL-CIO, with funding provided by the Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County.

Report a Fraud Today!

Know of a dishonest contractor, employer, worker, health care provider, or attorney?

**Report-a-fraud hotline:
1-888-811-5974**

**Report-a-fraud website:
www.lni.wa.gov/fraud/**

Quarterly UI Tax reports and payments are due July 31, 2003.

Employment Security is an equal opportunity employer and provider of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons with disabilities.